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OPINION

Foreign Policy: How To Pirate Proof Your Tanker

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Commentary

AMNON GUTMAN

FROM **FP** Foreign Policy

Crew members secure barbed wires on the side of the tanker to prevent potential pirates from climbing aboard two days before going into the high-risk zone.

Amnon Gutman/Foreign Policy

Amnon Gutman is a photographer based in Israel.

A shocking rise in pirate attacks over the last decade has left many in the shipping industry scrambling for protection, leading to a new market for security forces trained to fight off the swashbuckling foes. Photographer Amnon Gutman witnessed this

scramble for security first-hand as he sailed one of the most dangerous waterways in the world with a crew, their cargo — and a private security detail trained in pirate-deflecting techniques. The fear of attack, especially near Somalia, is a well-founded one. As Gutman notes, of the 439 attacks reported to the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) in 2011, 275 attacks took place off Somalia's east coast and in the Gulf of Guinea on the west coast of Africa. However, while Somali pirates continue to account for the majority of attacks — approximately 54 percent — and while the overall number of Somali incidents increased from 219 in 2010 to 237 in 2011, the number of successful hijackings decreased from 49 to 28. The 802 crew members taken hostage in 2011 also marks a decrease from the four-year high of 1,181 in 2010.

This may be because of more aggressive policing — the European Union recently authorized its most expansive mission against pirates in Africa — but many ships aren't taking any chances. On this journey through the Indian Ocean on a shipping vessel that wishes to remain anonymous, SeaGull security walked through the methods still being developed to combat modern piracy.

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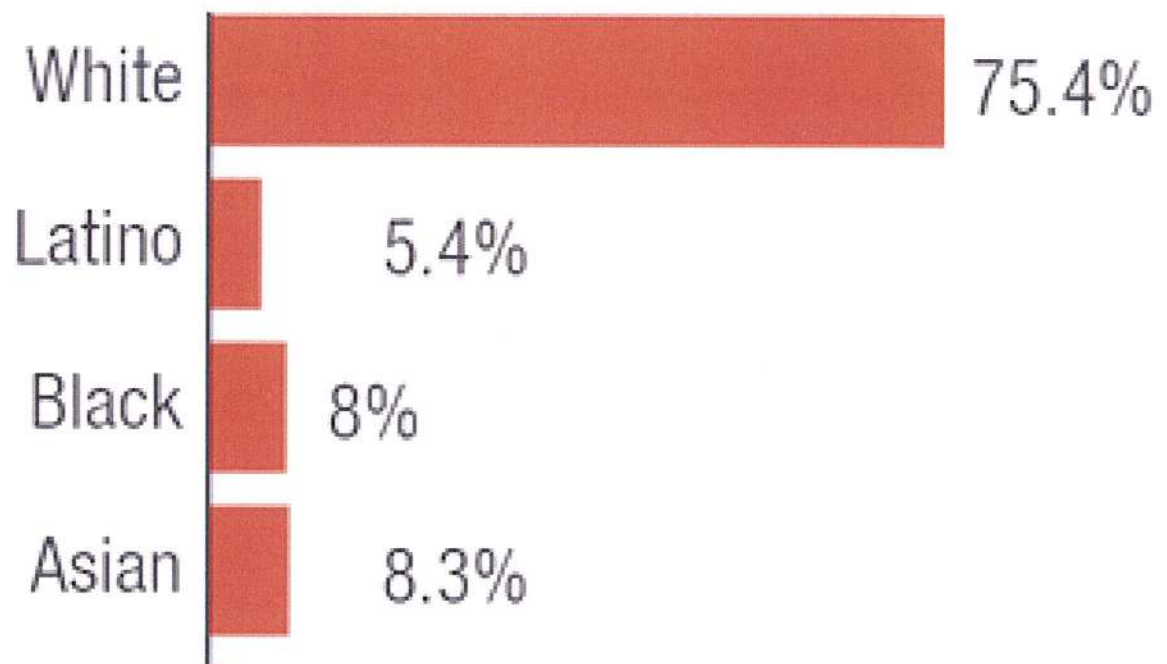
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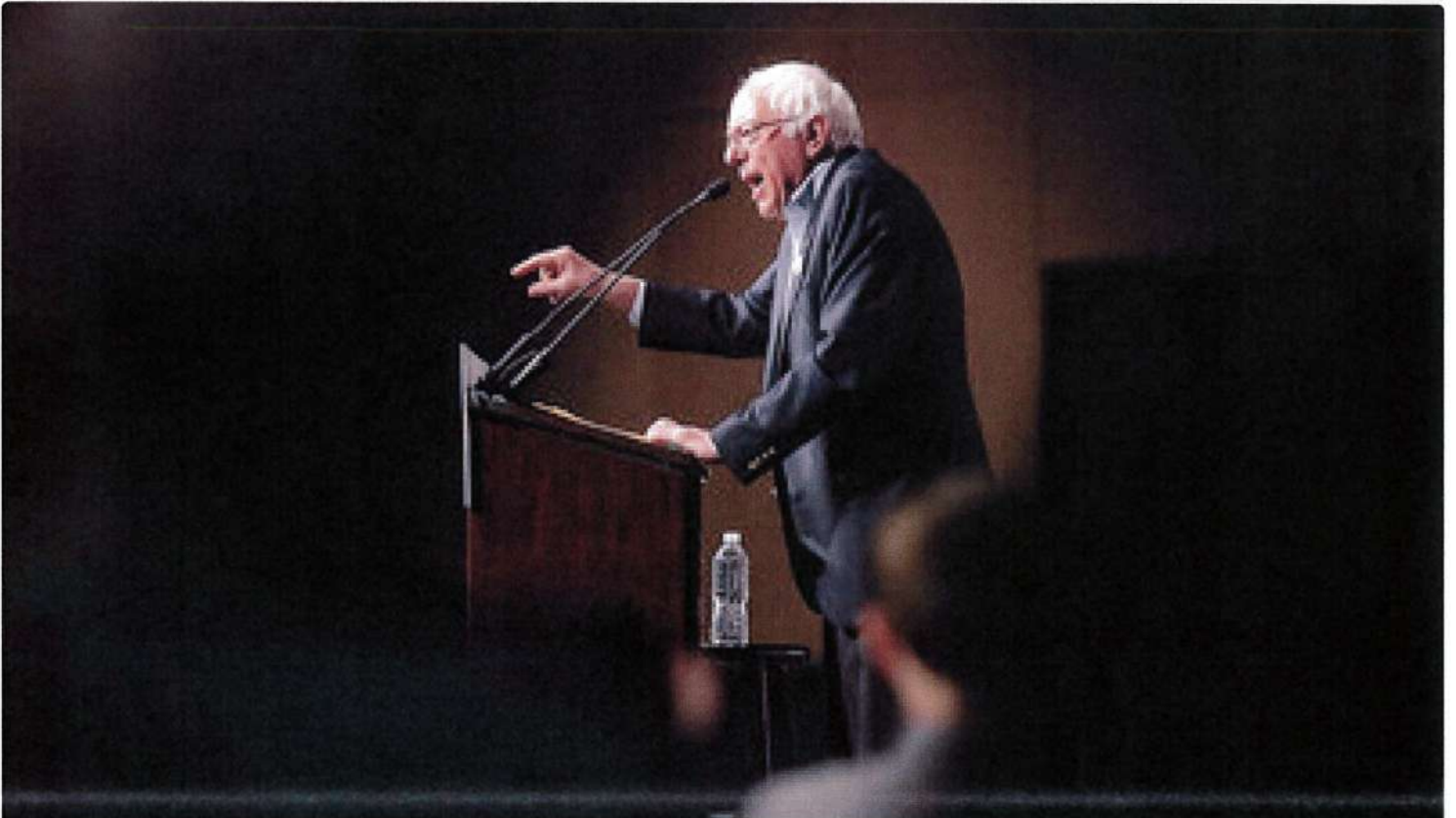
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